

REMARKS

With respect to the rejection under 35 USC Sec. 112, applicant has amended claims 49, 59 and 70 by inserting "substantially" before "closed" in each claim.

With respect to the rejections under 35 USC Sec. 102 and 35 USC 103, all of those rejections are based upon Maiefski et al. as the sole or primary reference. However, Maiefski et al. does not teach an important feature of the claimed invention.

In applicants' invention, each of the valve bodies 38 is connected to a different set (row) of reaction vessels through one of the distribution channels. Thus, actuating a particular valve will connect the output of the multi-way selector valve to all of the vessels in the set (row) connected to the actuated valve simultaneously. This feature is not taught by Maiefski et al.

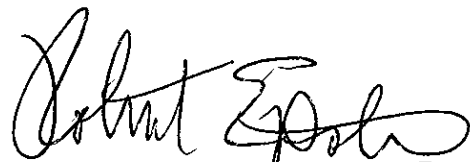
Maiefski et al. teaches a multi-way selector valve 46 (comparable to applicants' selector valve 48) and a pressure relief valve 80 (comparable to applicants' relief valve 54). Maiefski's valves 46 and 80 control the flow of the selected fluid into a single channel 90 that feeds all of the distribution channels 94 simultaneously. In other words, neither valve 46 nor valve 80 of Maiefski et al. is associated with different ones of the distribution channels and neither is independently actuatable to feed only the reaction vessels connected to the channel associated with that valve.

Maiefski's valves 104, a different one of which is associated with each distribution channel, are check valves to prevent backflow and are not "actuated" except by the fluid flow acting against the weight of the ball 106. Accordingly, these valves cannot be properly said to be "independently actuated" in the same sense as applicants' valves 38.

However, to clearly differentiate of Maiefski et al., all of the claims have been amended to require a "means for independently actuating each of the valves to connect" the source selection means and the distribution channel associated with the actuated valve. Maiefski et al. has no comparable structure. Further, Maiefski et al. is not capable of performing the function of this structure.

Accordingly, Maiefski et al. does not anticipate applicants' claims, as amended. In addition, Maiefski et al. does not provide a primary teaching which, when combined with any of the other references, renders applicants' amended claims obvious.

Respectfully submitted,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Robert Epstein", with a stylized flourish at the end.

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